(c) the persons responsible for the said negligence and the action being taken against them; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to check the recurrence of such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) to (d) No, Sir. There has been no report about any quantity of wheat spoiled and rendered unfit for human consumption due to negligence of the Food Corporation of India during 1996-97. However, a quantity of about 37301 MTs of wheat have been transferred from sound to damaged due to natural calamities which will be disposed off as per procedure.

The stocks of foodgrains are stored by scientific methods in the FCI godowns and subjected to thorough examination by trained Quality Control Officers on fortnightly basis regularly. Periodical dis-infestation treatment is imparted to protect the stored grains from spoilage during storage because of various factors like moisture, insects, rodents, microorganism etc.

[English]

Situation in North-East

974. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN :
SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received response from the extremist groups operating in the state of North-Eastern Region to the Prime Minister's appeal to them for talk on restoration of peace in the region;

(b) if so, the groups that have responded favourably;

(c) whether they have laid down any conditions for the talk;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether former Prime Minister has talk with the leader of N.S.C.N., an extremist group of Nagaland in Switzerland; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (f) Yes, Sir. So far the Issac-Muivah group of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland has responded. The Prime Minister in a statement in both the Houses of Parliament on 25 July, 1997 informed, interalia, that after his visit to Nagaland and other North-Eastern States, the Government's willingness to hold unconditional talks with the underground elements had been reiterated and that after talks with the Issac-Muivah group of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, it has now been agreed to cease fire for 3 months with effect from 1st August, 1997 and embark upon politicai level discussions.

[Translation]

Inclusion of Assamese Tribes in S.T. List

975. SHRI SIBU SOREN : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether several assamese tribes such as Santhal, Munda, Oraon, Ho, Khadia etc. living in Assam have been kept out of the Scheduled Tribes List;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the total population of these tribes at present;

(d) whether the Government propose to include the said tribes in the Scheduled Tribes List; and

(e) if so, the time by which the decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Government of Assam had not recommended their specification as Scheduled Tribes.

(c) Community-wise enumeration of non Scheduled communities is not done at the time of census, hence population of these communities is not known.

(d) The Government of Assam have now recommended the inclusion of Tea and Ex-Tea Garden communities such as Santhal, Munda, Oraon, HO, Khadia etc. in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Assam (excluding autonomous districts). This proposal is being considered alongwith similar proposals received from other states in the context of proposed revision of orders specifying SC/ST lists.

(e) No specific time schedule can be indicated.